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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 003867

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/02/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: AUSTRALIANS EXPAND AUSAID, INCREASE CIVILIAN
CONTRIBUTIONS/ REPORT TRIBAL INTEREST IN RECONCILIATION

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Classified By: CDA Joseph Mussomeli. Reasons: 1.4 (b)&(d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: In his pre-departure outcall December 3, Australian Ambassador Martin Quinn made no indication of a possible troop increase but noted Australia plans to increase civilian contributions, including by increasing police advisors from three to twenty-five. The Australian Special Ops task force will continue to work closely with the US Special Ops forces, but the Australian focus will be moving toward new initiatives and deployment of civilians, including AUSAID development assistance in less-controlled areas. Quinn noted that Afghans in rural areas say they are tired of fighting and welcome reintegration programs.
End Summary.

12. (C) In a December 3 meeting Australian Ambassador Martin Quinn recounted to Ambassador Eikenberry that earlier that day FM Spanta told him that GIROA is still unhappy about the London conference. Quinn also said that during Australian PM Kevin Rudd's November 11 visit with Australian troops in Uruzgan, Rudd had delivered (by phone) a tough message to Karzai. According to Quinn, Karzai had blamed POTUS for Afghanistan's current problems in a rambling incoherent response. Quinn did not elaborate but noted that the Government of Australia was unhappy about comments Karzai made in his November 9 NPR interview with Margaret Warner in which Karzai said the West is not in Afghanistan for the sake of Afghanistan, but to fight the war on terror.

13. (C) Observers, perspectives of the political and security situation in Afghanistan had been more optimistic in early 2008, but attitudes have swung from too optimistic to too pessimistic, opined Quinn. Policy shouldn't be determined based on optimism or pessimism, assessed Quinn, we just need to keep working at it. Uruzgan had been a mess a couple of years ago, troubled by lots of tribal problems, but with good efforts, today it is much more stable and secure. Australia plans to continue to increase its development projects in Afghanistan and is moving into less controlled areas such as Dai Kundi, where new projects include construction of a gravel road.

Tribal Interest in Reintegration; Expansion of
Development Assistance and Increasing Civilian
Contributions

¶4. (C) Ambassador Quinn said his key message is that Australia is in Afghanistan for the long haul. The Australians have been talking to Afghans living in tribal areas who are tired of fighting and are interested in reintegration -- and want to benefit from development assistance programs, continued Quinn. On the military side the Australians had increased their troops contributions from 1100 to 1550 this year, but also plan to increase contributions of civilians and will increase the number of police advisors from three to twenty-five. AUSAID is now in Afghanistan and will undertake new initiatives. The Australian military is moving away from reconstruction and focusing increasingly on training. Although the Australian Special Ops task force will continue to work closely with the US Special Ops forces, a large part of the Australian focus will be moving toward new initiatives and deployment of civilians.

Keeping Up Pressure on the Dutch to Stay

¶5. (C) The Australians are complying with requests that they keep pressure on the Dutch to keep a battle group in Uruzgan, confided Quinn. He predicted that the Netherlands will probably keep a PRT, but noted The Hague is under tremendous pressure to withdraw their troops - especially from one of the ruling coalition partners.

New Australian Ambassador to Arrive in Late December

¶6. (U) The meeting was the out-call for Quinn, who departs Afghanistan December 3 to return to Canberra.

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His successor Paul Foley is scheduled to arrive in Kabul around December 28.

Mussomeli